

I fully support the FCC's Notice of Proposed Rule Making and Order regarding eliminating the Morse code Element 1 exam for Amateur Radio High-Frequency licenses.

Being an 18 year-old no-code Technician class operator and a member of No-Code International, I am amazed at the sorry state that Amateur Radio is in today where some people would have us continue to live in the past. Requiring people to have to learn Morse code over all of the other modes that this hobby can provide and then not requiring them to use this mode after the exam is truly nonsensical and illogical! If this were indeed the case, many amateurs would fail outright! This clearly violates our mandated objective of "continuing the advancement of the radio art."

It can be argued that Morse code is indeed an effective mode of communication, but so are other modes, and it is by no means a GUARANTEED mode. Being a short-wave listener, I can assure you that it too is susceptible to both interference and fading, just like any other mode.

One point made by many people is that Morse code has been instrumental in saving countless lives such as is the case in emergency communications. I am in no way denying this at all, this being one of Morse code's strengths: being very simplistic. However, this raises some very interesting questions.

- 1) Why is it that if one wishes to join the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) or any other emergency aid group, one is not required to take a Morse code exam? I myself am a member of my local ARES group and truly treasure the experiences I have had with it.

Now in regards to some of my fellow commenters, I find it fascinating that although they state that the future of emergency communications is in danger, they are apparently incapable of either checking their spelling or staying to a main point and meander into totally unrelated comment and sometimes making their comment indecipherable to anyone else. Now, it is my understanding that this is a FEDERAL website from which anyone in the general public has the means to view the comments posted from those concerned. It is my belief that if we are to represent Amateur Radio, we should have greater standards for our postings here on such a CRITICAL matter with huge consequences for the future of our beloved hobby.

- 2) If we are to continue with this out-dated requirement, why not begin administering spelling and grammar tests to applicants? I in no way find this question unreasonable. In my ARES training, I have learned that it is not the medium of communication which is most important in emergency

communications but the content of the message you are passing on. To be the most efficient, any message needs to be to the point and carefully thought out before being sent. One misspelled or missing word could indeed mean the difference between life and death and should by no means be taken lightly! Perhaps the question we should be asking is not whether Morse code should be a requirement but rather those of us who participate in emergency communications are in fact able to articulate a useful message?

Now, onto perhaps my favorite reason to preserve the REQUIREMENT of Morse code: The HAM bands will no longer be the peaceful haven for all of the old-timers and that without the Morse code requirement, the bands will soon be rampant with “the general scum of the earth,” taking up way too much spectrum, and not using Morse code. Many questions come to mind, a few not appropriate for general public browsing. A couple of the main ones are:

- 1) HUH?!?!
- 2) Exactly how are you going to be able to discern between the idiot operators already out there and the “CB quality” operators that are bound to come out of the woodwork? I suppose that operators will start demanding that each other show Morse code proficiency before continuing with their conversations... (That’ll be the day!)

In the end, I am definitely not opposed to using Morse code whatsoever. But the main reason why we need to do away with it as a requirement is simple: It is no longer a “gateway” mode in that it is acting as a filter rather than a point of curiosity. With my generation advancing into the age of the internet where instant messaging and file sharing are now the “norm,” how is Morse code alluring to us? I would have thought that when the “@” was recently added to the list of symbols used in Morse code, some people would have had an epiphany! Morse code has long been associated with Amateur Radio and that image will not soon go away because we have continued to drag our feet. What is now needed desperately for this hobby is to associate it with the new digital modes such as packet and the different types of digital file transfer of which I personally love to copy! These are the new “gateway” modes. Quite frankly, Morse code isn’t sexy to us.

Morse code is just another mode. The ARRL will continue to broadcast practice sessions on the airwaves and people will continue to get their cute little wall hangings and they will put them on the refrigerator door, thus telling the world they know “the code.” Life will go on! Civilization might end but this WILL NOT be the reason!

Enough of my rantings! Onto the next post!

